

# The Labour Organiser

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## Election Preparation

**FROM NOW ON WE MUST—BE PREPARED!**

**L**ABOUR recently has been asking for a General Election. You, dear reader, have doubtless subscribed to that demand.

Well, are we ready? Are Labour's electoral forces in battle trim? Have we the workers, the candidates, the material, and all the rest of it wherewith to march into the turmoil of a General Election and come out of it triumphant?

We are not going to press for that answer here and now. One thing certain is that Election Preparation is the one thing needed for every D.L.P., every L.L.P., every women's section, every ward committee, every organised unit of every kind within the ambit or the orbit of the Party.

Time presses. We have asked for that election, and if we get it, and if we are then unready dare we ever dare again?

Election preparation therefore becomes the first consideration and the paramount task of us all. How do we begin?

Each unit of our Party ought to-day to ask introspectively the question we have asked above. Are we ready?

The very first move in Preparation

is that introspection—a stock-taking. And it is no job either for pessimists, for crokers or those easily discouraged. It takes a big heart to count up our deficiencies and boldly plan to remedy them: against time.

For the next few issues, or for as long as events give us time, the "Labour Organiser" will endeavour to lay before its readers hints and advice on this problem of getting ready. We shall seek to traverse all the well-found steps, to explain them, to point out the things to be done, and why; also what to do when the time comes, for is not training a vital part of preparation? We shall try to write simply, our expected reward being that our advice is read and taken in time.

So then this stocktaking. These are the things we must review:—

1. The general health and condition of the Local Party.
2. The resources in man-power. The membership figures and the prospects for workers.
3. The circumstances of candidate.
4. The financial prospects.
5. The material preparations already in hand, i.e., records, stocks.

## Election Preparation—

Arising out of the examination of all these matters will come the steps to be taken to revive and invigorate the ranks; the ways to recruit workers and members; the selection, if not done, of candidate—or the final and irrevocable acceptance of the chosen; the ways of raising money; the ordering of envelopes, canvass cards, etc. It is following on all this that one will plan the election, estimate the cost, and decide the things to do and when to do them.

First let us realise that all this calls for thought, for some research, for quiet work, for consultation; at least, for earnest, careful attention to details, right from the first thought of election. The disaster to fear is not the power of the enemy, or his prowess; it is, rather, that a D.L.P. will blunder into an election ill-trained and unprepared, trusting to luck and the Lord to see them through.

The general health of one's Party is not solely a matter within the control of locals. But what a difference can be made in local prospects if bickering stops and one grand enthusiasm seizes the Party. An army marches on discipline; Labour must march on Love. Can this be brought about, artificially? We think so, but the very desire to settle old scores and be as one Party is half the battle. One golden rule: if your Party is to be happy, get busy. Work, not the over-work of the willing horses, but the organised practices of the Party, is the best—and most remunerative policy—in any election preparation.

In a review of your Party's prospects such as we have in mind, the poor Parties, the weak wards, the unorganised areas, all come up for review. Determine to do something in these places, before the election, and plan to do it now. The whole value of this pre-view lies here.

Few Parties will find themselves fully ready in man-power. If indeed yours be, then remember the neighbours! Mobilisation, calling to the colours, is as much a feature of election preparation as of military preparation. But one must know whom to call up.

Are all the lists of past helpers ready and revised? Do the changes and the deaths, physical and political, leave the Party with very many workers missing—or, happily, has new strength come in?

Mobilisation on the grand scale is something which always appeals. When the election comes, why not an immediate circular to every member, through the half-penny post, asking for help, telling where to report, and listing the several activities one can volunteer to perform—not all canvassing?

This call to arms is worth while. The result in proportion to cost is wonderful. But the time is not yet. The present work is to perfect the lists of those one will summon later on.

Here is one of the weaknesses. Even in big membership parties, members' name and proper addresses do not reach the D.L.P. secretary, or the prospective election agent. Yet what fatuity that a Party does not know its own people! Here is a thing to remedy at once. Collect all members' names and addresses, keep ready-addressed a set of envelopes for them, and, going one better, tick the lot up in the register as "fors."

But, woeful thought, will not the tale often be that "we haven't got the members although we have got the support"? Now isn't that just a position to be tackled now—as a part of preparation?

A preliminary election spurt by way of a special membership canvass is quite possible in some places and would bring in good returns. Why not? Don't we yearn for, and some of us demand, May elections? If we had our way all our election work would be doing now. This little spurt in the good, and not too hot, weather could well change all our prospects (and certainly our prospects for workers) in a good many constituencies.

By the way, there are lots of constituencies where at a by-election, or because at the last election there was no Liberal candidate, many Liberals helped our man. It is a mistake to leave these people out in the cold or



## Election Preparation—

outside one's preparations. To neglect them is to invite them to get together with familiar spirits and start a show of their own, for despite our wishes the Liberal Party isn't dead yet. We suggest it is good policy to early ask these people to help again.

Then there is the question of the candidate. As an old election agent the writer's idea of Heaven is an election without candidates (as their dream possibly is of a peaceful world without election agents). Be that as it may, the ill-assortment has got to work somehow at an election. Look to the working parts and oil the machinery now.

Are all the business arrangements fixed up? Is the candidate definitely going to the poll and will his personal affairs free him at the election? Are the financial arrangements clear and who, for instance, stands the candidate's personal expenses? Where will the candidate live during the election? Who will be the election agent? On what terms? Are candidate and prospective agent fitted to one another? Has the candidate any special call on speakers or organisations, or sections of public opinion? Is the candidate *au fait* with the general lines and plans on which the Party propose to conduct the election? These and a dozen other questions spring to mind as being matters to be talked over and settled as a part of the plans of preparation.

Finance is usually voted to be the biggest bug-bear in local preparations. And yet this matter is allowed to drift on, without being faced up to, year after year, and even right up to the election. That is a ghastly pity, because preparations begun in time do really pay. We know all about "the money always comes in" and all the other tales, but why not card index the money-raisers beforehand? Why not plan to raise, and ear-mark, some special fund for the election? Why not estimate the cost of the election and boost the sum one wants to raise? Pre-election finance is an uncommon phrase, but it might save some post-election bank overdrafts which worry us even to this day!

And now as to the material preparations for the election. Registers, one-sided ones; are they in, and marked? Envelopes, are they ordered? They should be, for prices are going up. We do urge our readers to enquire for and buy their envelopes. They eat nothing, their purchase now ensures safety, and their possession saves time and anxiety later on. Readers are assured that it is foolish and dear to buy from local stationers.

Then there is that mass of election material, such as wall-boards, poster-boards, committee room boxes and equipment, the loud speaker and lots more. Shall we, like the foolish virgins, go without oil in our lamps or get ready while yet there is time?

[Several articles and many useful hints next month].

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# THE PARTY AT WORK

## LATEST LEAFLETS AND PAMPHLETS.

Two new leaflets have been published by the Labour Party since our last issue.

No. 73 is entitled "Face the Facts About Peace" and is illustrated. No. 74 is a reprint of Labour's recently-published "Peace Manifesto." Samples of both leaflets have been circulated.

We have also seen an advance proof of a new pamphlet to be published in a few days entitled "Nazi Germany's and Fascist Italy's Invasion of Spain," a publication which gives some remarkable facts about the supply of arms and men by the two countries mentioned. The pamphlet will be id., post free 1½d., or 6/- per 100.

## LABOUR PARTY POSTERS.

A choice of no fewer than fifteen posters for May Day and general propaganda purposes, is now open to Local Labour Parties.

To succeed nowadays one must be colourful. This dictum applies with special force to politics and Parties. Programmes and policies must be striking—vivid in a sense—in any case, like Labour's, they must arrest and hold arrested.

In presentation posters do that. That is, if the posters are right. And in any case Labour has got 15 sorts to sell, and they are ready to sell to YOU.

Local Parties will really be wise to order posters, to order early, and to order plenty. May Day, 1938, offers a unique opportunity.

## WEST FULHAM.

An interesting batch of literature used in the West Fulham by-election has reached us, from which it is clear that Labour here was ultra-modern. A vigorous campaign, a vigorous candidate, and a vigorous body of agents and workers, led by Mr. A. C. Powell and Hinley Atkinson, gave Labour a welcome win at a timely moment. London Labour's rally to this fight was truly something remarkable—the numbers of cars and of workers who contributed to this victory (and to all of whom we offer congratulations) goes

to show that terrific effort is now required to hold one's own in a modern by-election.

## Additional Candidates Endorsed by N.E.C.

23rd MARCH, 1938

DURHAM: Hartlepool.—Mr. D. T. Jones, 41, Llanover Road, Coedpenmaen, Pontypridd.

NORTHANTS: Kettering.—Mr. Frederick Gould, North Road, Midsomer Norton, Somerset.

SOMERSET: Bath.—Mr. G. G. Desmond, 14, Rotunda Terrace, Cheltenham, Glos.

YORKS.: Barkston Ash.—Mr. C. J. Hurley, 124, Calvert Road, Hull. Pudsey and Otley.—Mr. M. H. Wigglesworth, 3, Kirkstall Mt., Leeds, 5.

### WALES.

PEMBROKESHIRE: Mr. Wm. J. Jenkins, Hoplas, Woolaston, Pembroke.

### SCOTLAND.

LANARKS.: Glasgow, Kelvingrove.—Mr. John Downie (Co-op.), Clyde Cottage, Glasgow Road, Wishaw, Lanarks.

## WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE.

NORTHANTS.: Daventry.—Mr. Henry Whittaker.

YORKS.: N. Leeds.—Mr. John Huddleston.

## CANDIDATES ENDORSED BY N.E.C.

23rd FEBRUARY, 1938

ESSEX: Southend-on-Sea.—Mr. G. R. Sandison, 37, Priory Road, London, N.W.6.

WARWICKS.: Birmingham, Sparkbrook.—Mr. James MacColl, 39, Gloucester Gardens, W.2.

### SCOTLAND.

EDINBURGH: West.—Mr. G. G. Stott, The Manse, Crammond, Edinburgh.

NORTH MIDLOTHIAN: Mr. M. McPherson, 1, Corstorphine Hill Avenue, Edinburgh.

# Some Reports and Balance Sheets

**L**OCAL Labour Party reports to hand this month are mostly of a hum-drum sort. Houghton-le-Spring, however, report an increase of 1d. per annum in local T.U. affiliation fees. Details are also given of registration work. Unfortunately, both notes are exceptions to the rule.

London University Labour Party are an interesting Party. Norman Angell is their candidate, and there is an air of busines about their doings. Present membership 341—highest ever.

West Lewisham—not such a “favourable” proposition as the East—tell of 1,650 members, an increase of 350. Members’ subs. have also risen, and we note that the seven wards, the women sections, and youth are all active. Women have had afternoon canvassing and literature selling teams.

Hendon Constituency L.P. report increased membership (now 2,135) and increased funds. Altogether there has been a very useful year and other Local Parties might note that this has been accomplished **without** a Parliamentary candidate; selection of one hoped for shortly. We thank Hendon for tribute to “L.O.”

Many Parties will envy Derby its 13,647 affiliated membership (increase on year 1,320). Individual membership has now reached 1,496, and having some knowledge of special local difficulties, we congratulate our friends on this real progress. Derby’s report is also a Year Book and contains lots of useful addresses and information as to the activities of local organisations.

Spennymoor D.L.P., where our old friend Ald. J. Cape still lies on the sick list, say in their report: “In the early days, the task of the pioneers was to break the tradition of Lib.-Lab. ticket—Lodges and Trade Union Branches, with very few exceptions, kept aloof from Independent working class organisation as though it were a Plague, because it was called Socialism. Our only known organisations were a few branches of the I.L.P., with their Branch Membership of from 5 to 10

members — who valiantly took the gospel right into the centre of the Trade Union Branches. To ask for financial support was like asking for a blood transfusion . . . But during the 21 years—by our persistent propaganda and unity of purpose, we have established an organisation with a Political conception second to none in the country. . . . In 1917 we had no representatives on the County Council; we now hold all seats—and five Aldermen, with substantial majorities on the four Urban Authorities in the Division.” [Well done, Jack.—Ed. “L.O.”]

Neath (Llandaff and Barry) Local Labour Party send us a report which worries us. It is an excellent record of financial success and £393 income for a Local Party is not to be sneezed at. But we note £245 from whist drives and £21 only from members’ subs. Of the total income, about £38 only is expended on definite political activity. We venture to suggest to our friends that this isn’t real Socialist progress.

South Hackney (Member, Herbert Morrison) claims a year of victory and achievement, during which membership has been consolidated and improved. Good luck with this year’s figures.

City of Leeds L.P. (the “Borough” Party) in a satisfactory report claim both increased affiliation fees (now £491) and the maintenance of the City’s individual membership. Well, that took some doing last year. But how Socialists in other parts are yearning for this great city to re-capture its Council!

West Bermondsey had a year of records; 1,129 members were enrolled. After lapsing 499, there remained a record total of 2,900, producing an income of £346 3s. 1d., thus topping last year’s record by over £55. W.B. has regular meetings of the officers of the Party and wards and sections, and this innovation, it is stated, has proved of immense value. Others, please note, also that the West Bermondsey Magazine had another successful year entirely without cost to the Party.



# MAYDAY LITERATURE AND PUBLICITY

By MAURICE HACKETT

**C**ONCENTRATED in the first few days of May will be Labour's Annual Celebration meetings, demonstrations and processions.

No other time of the year affords such an opportunity of reaching great masses of people, who are either demonstrating their faith in Socialism or watching others do so. Every Party cannot afford to indulge in spectacular tableaux and decorated vehicles. Some have no large and costly banners, but all can afford a show of Labour Party Posters.

Double crown posters, pasted on straw-boards (which printers supply for 2d. or 3d. each) and then nailed to strips or poles of light wood, will give a very striking display as members carry them through the streets.

Just imagine the effect of twenty comrades all holding aloft the poster: "Stop War," which shows the child wearing the gas mask. Twelve of the posters cost 2s. 3d., post free; the straw-boards 2s. to 3s., and the sticks or poles 1s. For about 6s. any small group can add their contribution to an effective procession. There are 13 or 14 posters to choose from. If a varied display is required, send to Head Office for a full set of all Party double crown posters. You will obtain 15 for 2s. 6d., post free.

In addition to the procession, platforms at indoor and outdoor meetings should be made attractive with banners and posters. It is well worth while to spend 2s. 6d. in decorating a platform with Party posters, and it is also good propaganda.

Send to Transport House **NOW** for one or more sets of double crown posters at 2s. 6d. per set, post free.

"Your Britain" Nos. 1 and 2 will be best sellers this May Day. Sales posters are supplied free with all orders. Stewards should be organised for sales to those who are watching along the route of procession, to the crowds at the demonstrations and at public indoor meetings. Even where the meetings are held in public parks

(where selling is prohibited) every approach and gate of the park should be covered, and stewards stand with supplies as the crowds flock in.

In London a central squad of literature sellers has been formed and the membership in the first week reached 70. The members are recruited from Literature Secretaries and Stewards in Greater London. They will be acting as a shock brigade for May Day literature sales, and at all special occasions of centrally organised meetings, processions and demonstrations.

All the larger cities in the country can easily organise similar groups, based first of all on the Divisional Literature Secretaries and their helpers. In Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool we have over 20 Literature Secretaries. In smaller cities, in proportion, central groups should be formed for this purpose, and regular street sales, door-to-door selling and other experiments.

The London Group sold over 600 copies of "Your Britain" No. 2 a week ago on the streets of Central London. The value of the work was not only in the number of pamphlets sold; literally thousands of people noticed over 60 comrades, carrying sales posters and selling "Your Britain" at all the key road junctions and circuses in Town. The publicity value was enormous. The cost was nil.

Arrange for literature sales on May Day.

Man the routes of processions.

Cover the meetings.

Have literature stalls at all indoor meetings.

Get the chairmen of indoor and outdoor meetings to announce the pamphlets that are on sale.

Use the sales posters provided.

Order supplies early.

Sell more Party pamphlets.

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NEXT MONTH:

Articles on Election  
Preparation.

From the highest authority in the Labour Movement we have recently been told that the Labour monthlies published by us are the finest in the country.

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who will provide this in connection with the handling of advertising and who specialise in the publication of Labour monthlies and weeklies.

In conjunction with Ripley Printing Society the Archway Advertising Service are handling a growing number of newspapers throughout the country and giving satisfaction to various Parties.



### **Another Testimonial :**

"Seaham Divisional Labour Party,  
February 10th, 1938.

Dear Sir,

Thanks very much for your prompt delivery of last month's issue, and also for the excellent manner in which the paper was got up. We have had many complimentary remarks about it.

(Signed) H. F. LEE."





# QUESTIONS ANSWERED—

## A POPULAR FEATURE

WHY WORRY?  
ASK THE EDITOR

### Rejected Nomination Papers.

**Q**UESTION.—At a recent election the Nomination Forms were completed and were sent in to the Returning Officer with less than the requisite eight assentors. A note from the R.O. indicated that something was wrong, but of course did not indicate what it was.

Fresh Nomination Forms were applied for and completed this time with eight assentors, but unfortunately some who signed the rejected papers also signed the new papers, and as a result the nomination was declared invalid, in spite of the fact that the second form was otherwise in order.

I take it there is no appeal against this except by Election Petition, which would not be likely to be successful.

Is the person who signed the two forms (for one candidate) likely to hear any more about it, and is there any way of avoiding trouble for him?

**A**NSWER.—Our sympathies are with our correspondent in this matter. There is no appeal against the decision given except by petition, and though that decision seems good in law, it betrays a weakness in the rules, and inflicts a hardship which we think was never intended by Parliament.

The rules governing the matter are contained in the Second Schedule Part 1 to the L.G. Act, 1933. It is there laid down, Rule 2 (4), that "no person shall at an election sign more than one nomination paper in respect of the same candidate . . . and if (so) . . . his signature shall be inoperative," except so far as the paper first delivered.

No penalties are laid down for transgressing this Rule, and so our questioner need fear no further trouble.

Now although the rule seems clear enough, we find it difficult to believe that it was intended that where a

man's first signature was inoperative for want of compliance with rule, he should be incapable of correcting his error.

In a Parliamentary Election there are opportunities for being heard upon an objection. Not so in a Local Government election. Decisions are given without any arguments being heard, yet in this case it could have been contended, probably unsuccessfully, however, that the first signatures were void and therefore inoperative and that the second signatures were consequently admissible.

Anyway, if the course advocated by the "L.O." for dealing with objections (i.e., a short appeal to a County Court judge) were embodied in the rules, the manifest grievance here to be found would at least have been ventilated. Our electoral laws are full of snags like this.

### The Employment of Collectors.

**Q**UESTION.—I wonder if you could give me the benefit of your experience with regard to the following proposals that are likely to be brought forward for consideration in this Division:—

1. The employment of collectors to collect members' contributions on a commission basis.
2. The setting up of a Bureau to give advice on Public Health, Workmen's Compensation, Unemployment Benefit Claims, Pensions, etc., in return for the payment of 1d. per week.

**A**NSWER.—First question. If our friend could turn to our issues for January, February and March of last year he would find there the collected experience of most of the big membership Parties on this and on the general question of building.

It would be unwise to attempt to lay down a general rule on this question.

The majority of Local Parties, and some very successful ones amongst them, carry on year by year by entirely voluntary work. There is no question of payment, and the inducement of a reward has also failed in quite a lot of constituencies to secure or hold a good membership.

On the other hand, the failures may be said to have been exceptions and due to bad practice, and the voluntary successes too are certainly not typical of general conditions.

In our opinion there is no sound objection to the principle of payment. Its adoption, however, is a matter of expediency. Let it be remembered that our Party has a responsibility to its members and an implied liability to see that promised subscriptions are regularly collected, and properly and accurately accounted.

Except with the very best type of voluntary worker, and with lots of them, it is impossible to guarantee these things. Remunerated service of itself can give no better, but then remuneration implies a contract of service, more definite liability, supervision and regular accounting.

Do not imagine that an anaemic and ill-organised Party can be transformed by the mere process of offering inducement to members. That has been tried lots of times, and failed. Indeed, it has seemed to us that if there is a psychological time to turn over at all it is when membership is flourishing, and when collectors are in plenty, but in such plenty as to deplete other work. Turning over to paid service should be more a matter of change for the sake of securing more service in other ways than one of economising service and saving labour by concentrating collecting in a few hands.

#### Setting Up An Advice Bureau.

**A**NSWER.—Second question. We advise an agent to hesitate a long time before setting up machinery for giving gratis advice on all these matters.

In the first place, it is no part of a Socialist Party's obligations to wipe up the mess of Capitalism, and however one's heart withers may be wrung, it all delays if it does not obstruct the real work. Compassion may well overwhelm our common-sense and so find us at these jobs, but then we come up against the functions of the Trades

Unions and often of those whom we have elected to public bodies to attend to these matters.

Frankly, we disapprove of elaborate first-aid stations being set up by our Party. That's the work of others. Never, however, must we deny field ambulance where advice can be given that doesn't clash with other and more proper sources. Socialists can be sympathetic and helpful, but it is bad to forget our real mission.

#### How to Admit Members.

**Q**UESTION.—The Local Labour Party has introduced a rule by which the application for membership is placed before the General Committee and the past history of each applicant is thoroughly discussed. The application is then put to a vote.

The only reference I can find in the Party Constitution to this matter is that dealing with members of the Communist Party or any organisation ancillary to the C.P. What is your advice on this matter?

**A**NSWER.—It is difficult to deny the right of a Party to discuss and to decide who should be admitted as members. But it is another matter to X-ray every prospective member of the Party. We don't like that procedure, and the good sense of members ought to be sufficient to prevent any abuse of the routine for admittance to the Party. Strictly speaking, every Party has a right to accept or reject applicants for membership, but we prefer this right to be delegated to competent officers—as is usually the case.

#### University Members on Holiday.

**Q**UESTION.—I have a friend who is a member of the "University Labour Federation" at Cambridge, and he would like to know whether he is entitled to attend the G.C. meetings of the Local Party when on vacation, and if so, if he is entitled to vote on any motion or amendment which may be put to the meeting?

**A**NSWER.—A member of the University Labour Federation is not entitled to attend the G.C. meetings of any other Party, unless, of course, he happens to be a member. However, the Federations have sought



to get their members to put their services at the disposal of Local Parties in the areas to which they go when on holiday. This is a very laudable object, and Local Parties would be well advised to extend some degree of welcome to those who offer to serve them in this way. Quite frequently, such persons are invited to meetings, though they have no power to vote; their help has been found very effective in rural constituencies.



## ANSWERS IN BRIEF

C.F., Preston. — A Mayor may be elected from outside the Council, but must be *qualified* to be a Councillor (or Alderman), i.e., a person not qualified to be a councillor cannot be elected as Mayor. Similar provisions exist regarding the Chairmen of County Councils and District Councils.

C.F., Preston. — The Mayor may be paid such remuneration as the Council think fit. The Chairman of a County Council may also be remunerated, but no such provision exists as to Chairmen of District Councils.

N.E., Bristol.—*Justice of the Peace* gives law reports and invariably reports matters of interest to Local Government officers and others similarly interested. The price per copy is 1/4 weekly.

X.—You do not need to be a Philadelphian lawyer to become a Labour agent. We warn you that much of the time you are spending with those books at home would be better spent in practical organising work for your local Party. By all means get a working knowledge of election law, but don't lose grasp of the fact that an agent's job is to *organise*.

L.C., Pembroke. — We believe that the Post Office would object to accepting your scarlet envelopes for posting. The colour has, we believe, been held to be "embarrassing" to the postman.

R.L.S.—It is discourteous to say the least, though not punishable, to use another person's *nom de plume*. Actually, we ourselves have never used an

alternative address to this office, because Martin Hussingtree (our strictly accurate address) happens to be the *nom de plume* of a well-known Socialist ex-M.P.

T.O.—The term "Municipal election" is not confined to the election of a borough councillor. It covers any election to a corporate office in a Borough. Mayoral, Aldermanic or an Auditor's election are all "municipal elections."

P.D.—The giving of ribbon (i.e., a mark of distinction) is illegal. The gift of a flag is not illegal, unless it is also a mark of distinction. Payment out of election funds in either case is illegal. We shall deal more fully with this matter in an early issue.

M.A., Birmingham. — Difficulty in maintaining membership was general in the early part of last year. The Party has, however, pulled itself together in most places and is on the march again. Cantankerousness and suspicion will eat the heart out of any movement. Get your Party to drop both.

Party Member, Newcastle. — The "number-taker" is the person who takes the register numbers of electors outside the polling booth; the "runner" is the messenger who conveys this information to the committee room; the "checker" is the person who marks off the number on the board, sheet or register; and the "committee room clerk" is the person in charge thereof. All these terms are variously used and the duties are often merged, but we have given the orthodox duties and terms.

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EASY TERMS

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# THE LIFE OF ARTHUR HENDERSON\*

Mary Hamilton's "Life of Uncle Arthur," to give this work a colloquial and proper title, is a book that future historians will ponder in the hope of finding some clue, in the later life story of the great peace-maker, to the appalling change which has come over the relations of post-war states and nations.

The painstaking work of Arthur Henderson in the field of foreign affairs, covering (if one excludes purely Labour and Socialist relations through the International) a period commencing with membership of the War Cabinet until his death, seems, to our age, to have been utterly destroyed in a tenth of the time taken to accomplish it. Disarmament has given place to rearmament; understanding and negotiation to bullying and invasion; League methods to the ways of tyrants and of anarchy. Was Arthur Henderson a failure? We'll see.

No future historian who reads this "life" will see other than a supremely human and honest man, moulded mainly by his times, whose whole story is a testimony to the Democracy he served and the Socialism which he sought to combine with it. Henderson was a pillar (a word he often used) to both causes. If Social Democracy survives its present ordeal, history will accord the right reward to the subject of this book. The collapse in Foreign Affairs lies in large measure at the door of Democracy itself, certainly not at Henderson's. And the Party which stands pre-eminently as a monument to his life's work is not yet done; which fact future writers will also note.

Reading Mrs. Hamilton's readable and sometimes intuitive narrative, one is struck by the degree to which the span of Henderson's life corresponded to the rise and influence of those sentiments and movements most dear to him; and also by the fact that gather-

ing clouds have threatened more than one of these movements. Henderson, in his life, saw the heyday of Nonconformity, the political paramountcy of the Nonconformist conscience, the escape from bondage and the rise of Trade Unionism, the Liberalisation of politics, the emergence of political Labour, the growth of popular, and later, political education — and lots more. As a man of the people who not only saw but took part in all these things, Henderson's story must be a national possession; he who reads now takes a pre-natal lesson in history yet to be recorded.

And what of the man? It has been Mrs. Hamilton's good fortune to find recent and abundant material (although she complains of the lack of it in his earlier life) and the "close up" we get records at times unsuspected features. Henderson's strength and weaknesses come out with touching fidelity, and the man so many of our readers knew, and perhaps sometimes feared, stands revealed, honest and fearless, vain and dictatorial, true to friends and causes, relentless to enemies and injustices, cautious yet courageous, born to lead yet almost always second or lesser in command, a man of the world and religious, a queer make-up which permitted him to play the rare rôle of both leader and organiser.

Mary Hamilton's biography would be improved if she could have collected less in London and more from the provinces about Henderson's goings and comings in the Movement. There is a human chapter missing which we hope may be filled in another edition. The material is up and down the country and some of our own readers could supply the fare.

It was the lot of the Editor of this journal to conduct in 1919 the by-election which, in the height of Lloyd George's power and in the teeth of all opposition, sent Henderson back to Parliament. Fifteen years afterwards the Editor conducted Henderson's last

\* Arthur Henderson.  
Mary Agnes Hamilton.  
Wm. Heilmann.

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fight. These opportunities, and nearly 20 years of Party service with Henderson as the Chief, may some day tempt one to some stories. One or two must suffice to-day.

Here is one told to us by the present Mayor of Worcester, son of the late Dean, Dr. Moore Ede, who in his younger days hailed from Newcastle.

Picture, please, the servants' kitchen in a typical Victorian middle-class messuage. "Followers" were strictly forbidden. One evening the sounds of revelry were heard, and bells proving unavailing, a visit to the kitchen was indicated. Lo, and behold, a "follower"—a nice upstanding young man, true, but a trespasser, an intruder, a breaker of rules, an accessory, too, after in fact, to Eleanor's breach of rules. He was told to "go" (the future President of the Disarmament Conference) and go he went. The boss lived to regret that order. Henderson didn't.

The biography is not too profusely illustrated; there is room for more. But one photograph of Henderson in our possession has, perhaps, just as well, lain forgotten these many years; and, we venture, might have upset the decorum of Conferences if surreptitiously handed round. It is a snap of "Uncle Arthur" on a woman's back!

After the declaration in the Widnes

by-election, a procession formed up for the quarter-mile march back to the central. We had deployed somewhat for a photograph, and this was the chance an amazon-like young woman marching with us had been waiting for. Approaching "Uncle Arthur" from behind, she suddenly ducked, got her head between his legs and straightened herself as if A.H. was only a babe. Henderson was no light weight, yet that damsel carried him twenty or thirty paces on her shoulders with perfect ease.

Most people thought of Henderson as a "right winger." This, we think, was not always correct. True, when Henderson won at Barnard Castle, in 1903, the young bloods of the I.L.P. (your Editor among them) suspected him. Indeed, Henderson was suspect of being a Liberal tool for years till his sheer loyalty to independence disproved all that. But Henderson was never afraid to espouse an unpopular cause, and the final acceptance of Socialism by the Labour Party was a battle won and progress made largely through his aid and advocacy.

We are tempted to write on. But space forbids. Readers who can get this book, either on their own shelves or from the public library, will find interest and value and inspiration in its pages. None yet are capable of a final judgment on the leader we so recently lost. But the reviewer, like the writer, has no doubt of what the verdict eventually will be.



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**Councillor RICHARD MONTFORD,**  
J.P., C.C.

An interesting event took place recently when the London Agents of the Party celebrated at tea the eightieth birthday of their old colleague and present **Financial Secretary**, Dick Montford.

Actually Mr. Montford became an octogenarian two days prior to Christmas, but the celebration took heed mainly of the fact that there was something to celebrate and a very live and active officer to join in and to be congratulated. A lady sent roses and a very gay time appears to have been had at this event.

Councillor Montford's contact with Labour goes too far back for most of us, and his by-election experience also beats most. For many years he was the London District Secretary of the Agents' Union, and as indicated above, he still holds responsible office.

Some years ago Mr. Montford removed from the Borough of Islington, where he had served as Deputy-Mayor, to his native Wellingborough. Seventy-five would seem pretty late in life to begin a fresh Municipal career, but Dick did it! Now he is one of the busiest of Town Councillors and a County Councillor to boot. At present Mr. Montford is keen on a scheme for the incorporation of Wellingborough, and despite an initial setback, he banks on doing it within the next five years!

Good luck and long life, to one of a sort of which there are in this world all too few!

Out of the rut, too, is the East Lewisham Canvassing Squad Magazine, No. 2 of which has reached us. This is a 12 pp. quarto duplicated ginger magazine which exudes enthusiasm, news that matters to canvassers, and things to interest them. We only wonder how the time is found to duplicate it and canvass. Still we hear the work goes well, and as East Lewisham now has an agent (Mr. J. W. Raisin) and an assistant agent (Mr. L. Hilliard) results are to be expected.

**WOMEN'S MONTH—JUNE, 1938.**

"Women's Month" will be celebrated as usual in June, and in a circular just issued the National E.C. hopes that this year's activities are planned to focus special attention on the National Campaign on "Labour's Immediate Programme."

The special aim of "Women's Month" has always been to increase the membership of women in the Party, and by special propaganda to emphasise the importance of politics to women.

The following are some of the "Women's Month" activities which have been most successful in the past:

(1) County Gala Days with Processions and Pageants organised by Women's Advisory Councils. (2) Constituency Membership Campaigns with mass canvassing and literature distribution. (3) A series of Propaganda Meetings in all wards or polling districts within a Constituency leading up to a final Constituency Rally of Women. (4) County or Constituency Char-a-banc Outings with Village Meetings and literature distribution on the route. (5) Door-to-door distribution of leaflets and the sale of pamphlets. (6) Garden Parties, Children's Fêtes, Pageants, etc.

While, in the main, "Women's Month" activities are organised under the auspices of Women's Sections, Central Committees, and Advisory Councils, it is hoped that every Constituency Party will give active support to the women's activities, and will try to avoid planning any Party activity in June which might clash with the special events of "Women's Month."

We have received a copy of the "University of London Broadsheet," published by the London University Labour Party. This is a "local" Labour paper of an unusual kind, novel in its get-up, and distinguished, too, by its type of contributors. Robert Fraser edits, and we shall watch with interest whether the University L.P. succeeds in securing, by the merit of its journal, a commanding place for it in Labour journalism.



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# JACK CUTTER ON

## REGIONAL ORGANISATION

During the last year we have been hearing quite a lot about Regional Organisation, and it seems to be fairly generally accepted that this is the next step in the organisational development of the Labour Party.

Mine might be a voice crying in the wilderness, but I want to raise a few doubts about the idea with a view to securing a better understanding and more clear ideas as to what it implies.

For we must clearly understand what is meant by Regional Organisation, and it seems to me that few people really know. I have heard much glib discussion about it in various localities from people who have never seriously considered its details, its form, its implications, its costs or its benefits if any. They assume airily that Regional Councils will be "set up," but what these Councils' powers and terms of reference will be has apparently not occurred to them.

It can reasonably be argued that a measure of Regional Organisation already exists in the present organisational structure of the Party. Scotland has it; London has it; South Wales has recently formed its Council of Labour, and a similar organisation is being formed for Lancashire and Cheshire.

I grant that an exceedingly good case can be made out for co-ordinating Councils in these districts which have problems peculiar to themselves on which Labour opinion and policy is best forged and stated by the Labour Movement in the district. Few would challenge the right of the Labour Party in Scotland to declare Labour Policy on (for instance) Scottish Home Rule and the Future of the Highlands. The existence of the L.C.C. as an administrative unit makes inevitable the existence of the London Labour Party. The special industrial problems confronting South Wales and Lancashire warrant the co-ordination of local organised Labour opinion.

I grant all, that and ask: What is the next step? Where do we go from here?

Are we to assume that because a measure of Regional Organisation is good for these districts it must therefore be good for every district? I doubt it very much.

How can we "Regionalise" the Midlands? What special problems are peculiarly Midland problems and not common to other parts of the country? What purpose could a Midlands Regional Council serve which is not served by existing organisation? Would the quarterly presence in Birmingham of delegates from Nottingham, Leicester, Derby, Stoke and the Cotswold Hills solve any problems or strengthen the Party's influence in any way. Would it not be just another talking bee with a new rostrum handed gratis to the side-issue merchants with either bees in their bonnets or axes to grind?

You could possibly regionally organise Yorkshire, but what would be the point of it? The special problems of Hull and Bradford, of Sheffield and Leeds, of Scarborough and Middlesbrough, of Doncaster and York, are all different, and the problems common to all of them are also common to Glasgow, Plymouth, Wigan and Nether Wallop. The place to discuss these common problems is the Annual Party Conference.

And how would you regionalise the Eastern Counties? Suppose we bring together the "commuter" from greater metropolitan Essex and the land worker from Lincolnshire and Norfolk, what are they going to discuss except what can be discussed *and decided* at Annual Conference?

You may ask: What about Tyne-side, and if you do, I will reply with still more questions, such as: What about Tees-side, Wear-side, Mersey-side, Clyde-side and Severn-side? Is it proposed to establish a network of "special interest" groups all over the country? If so, we can scrap the whole constituency basis of our organisation in favour of a district industrial basis, and that, I submit, would be fatal to our electoral prospects, to our policy-

making machine, and to the spirit of the Party as a political force.

The dangers of that form of widespread organisational decentralisation are, in my opinion, infinitely greater than the few possible advantages.

There are probably some who will say: "But that is not what we mean by Regional Organisation. What we want is a Regional Council for each of the nine organisational districts so that members of the National Executive can be kept in close touch with the rank and file."

You will pardon me, but I think this proposal is even worse. It implies the election of N.E.C. members on a regional basis — a step which I hope this Party will never take for reasons which should be obvious, but which I am prepared if necessary to elaborate. It necessitates regional conferences on high policy with the loosening of the authority of Annual Conference and with the possibility of divergencies and splits which would be disastrous. It creates two distinct groups inside the N.E.C. and would clearly affect the unity of the T.U. and political sections. It assumes that periodical district synods would, in some mysterious way, give the unfortunate N.E.C. member a clear and microscopic insight into the minds of the Movement unprovided by his or her present daily and hourly contacts, labours, effort and thoughts.

There still remains another form of regional organisation favoured by some who see the dangers of decentralisation on the one hand and of the multiplication of policy-forming groups on the other. They advocate the provision of area councils to discuss organisational problems and ban decisions on policy which are the job of Annual Conference.

I am equally doubtful about the usefulness of this method. As an organiser I know that organisation is a matter for action rather than discussion and that organisational problems vary from district to district, and often from village to village. Methods successful in one area are failures next door. Methods suitable to one candidate are anathema to another. A particular approach to one electorate loses votes wholesale if applied to the next. Experience, common sense, a knowledge of your electorate, and hard work, plus that indefinable something which enables one to handle an electorate in the right way — these solve

organisational difficulties more quickly than talking about them in widely-garnered conventions. Then there are the duties, responsibilities and feelings of the County Federations to be considered, and it seems to me that much of their work would be usurped to no advantage by such machinery.

To sum up, I cannot see that any further extension of decentralisation would serve any useful purpose, and I can see many pitfalls. This is not the time for endless and largely futile discussion groups. It is the time for careful and determined preparations to secure victory for the agreed programme of the Party, and we can do that best on our own doorsteps and in our own Parties.

## Questions Answered Here

The Editor invites readers to send in queries of general interest on organisational and technical matters. Queries for which a reply is desired the same month, should reach us by 6th of the month.

## DEATH OF MR. B. J. BURRIDGE

Our readers will learn with profound regret of the death of Mr. Ben Burridge, which took place last month.

Mr. Burridge, who was 71 years of age, only retired from his agency work this year. A strong, striking and well-loved personality, Ben had stuck to his work almost to the last though his failing health was patent to all who saw him at the last annual Conference at Bournemouth. Few men commanded such respect in his locality, and his passing is a severe loss to his numerous friends in both the industrial and political wings of the Movement. Mr. Burridge was a former vice-chairman of the Agents' Union.

On behalf of our readers we extend our heartfelt sympathies to Mrs. Burridge and family.



# LABOUR PARTY DIRECTORY OF DIVISIONAL SECRETARIES

## MONTHLY LIST OF CORRECTIONS AND ALTERED ADDRESSES

Readers are specially requested to note that this list, published month by month in the "Labour Organiser," is the *only* published record of D.L.P. changes. The list is based upon the current annual report of the Party, and to assist readers, we publish, in addition to this month's alterations, the key numbers of constituencies which have appeared in previous lists.

The importance of this information is seen when it is stated that over 200 alterations were published during the past year. When communicating with the Secretary of any other Division *make sure* that no alteration of address has been published in these columns, and do so by referring to our index list. No distinction is made between a change of secretary and a change of address—the new entry is given in full.

### KEY TO INDEX LETTERS REPRESENTING LABOUR PARTY ORGANISING DISTRICTS.

A North-Eastern District	F South-Western District
B North-Western District	G Eastern District
C Midlands District	H Wales
D Southern and Home counties District	J Scotland
E London District	K Universities

### KEY TO NATURE OF CONSTITUENCY

(CD) County Divisions	(DB) Divisional Boroughs
(SB) Single-membered Boroughs	(BD) Borough Divisions
(DMB) Double-membered Boroughs	(U) Universities

## FULL LIST OF CONSTITUENCIES FOR WHICH CORRECTIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN PUBLISHED

December issue :—2, 5, 15, 26, 33, 38, 47, 53, 62, 127, 140, 159, 167, 231, 232, 239/41, 245, 249, 258, 262, 268, 294, 299, 303, 331, 378, 390, 394, 396, 423, 446, 476, 480, 481, 540.

January issue :—5, 9, 22, 45, 65, 263/5, 280, 305, 372, 375, 413, 440, 470.

February issue :—16, 26, 46, 53, 65, 89, 124, 127, 167, 175, 178, 258/9, 263, 274/8, 293, 299, 306, 352, 413, 487, 538.

March issue :—3, 9, 44, 70, 118, 143, 155, 160, 162, 171, 213, 224/5, 242/243, 278, 300, 340, 346, 378, 388, 403, 404, 420/3, 422, 423, 437/8, 450, 484, 511, 530, 575.

## FULL LIST OF CORRECTIONS RECEIVED SINCE LAST MONTH

Index No.	Description	Name of Organisation	Present Secretary and Address
D1	CD	Bedford D.L.P.	Mr. G. W. WRAY, 2, Albert Street, Bedford.
D2	CD	Mid-Beds. D.L.P.	Mr. H. CHESSUM, 9, Church Street, Wrestlingworth, Sandy, Beds.
D5	CD	Abingdon D.L.P.	Mr. W. B. GOODBODY, 27, High Street, Abingdon, Berks.
F29	CD	Penryn & Falmouth D.L.P.	Mr. J. H. BENNETTS, 15, River Street, Truro, Cornwall.

G89 CD	Chelmsford D.L.P.	Mr. W. SOUTHGATE, "Smallburgh," Kelvedon Common, Brentwood, Essex.
D129 SB	Bromley D.L.P.	Mr. W. G. BLUNDEN, William Morris Hall, Mason's Hill, Bromley, Kent.
E236 BD	Fulham, East D.L.P.	Coun. H. R. JONES, Room 4, 131, Dawes Road, Fulham, London, S.W.6.
E242 BD	Hammersmith North, D.L.P.	Ald. W. TURNEY, 400A, Uxbridge Road, Shepherd's Bush, London, W.12.
E249 BD	Islington West D.L.P.	Miss M. LITTMAN, 42, Stock Orchard Crescent, London, N.7.
E259 BD	Paddington South D.L.P.	Mr. N. P. J. HAWKEN, 85, Clarendon Street, London, W.2.
D283 SB	Ealing D.L.P.	Mrs. W. J. GOODERHAM, 43, Harrow Road, Ealing, London, W.5.
D285 SB	Hornsey D.L.P.	Miss M. KAUFMANN, 27, Endymion Road, London, N.4.
D333 CD	Henley D.L.P.	Mr. E. H. PERRIMAN, 59, Napier Road, Cowley, Oxford.
C335 CD	Oswestry D.L.P.	Mr. E. RICHARDS, Bryncastill, Oswestry, Salop.
D380 CD	Mitcham D.L.P.	Mr. A. H. HEMPSTEAD, 37, Deal Road, Tooting Junction, London, S.W.17.
C392 BD	Duddeston D.L.P.	Mr. L. WATSON, 199, Great Francis Street, Birmingham, 7.
A432 BD	Leeds North D.L.P.	Mr. A. TURNER, 15, Hawkswood Place, Leeds, 5.
J553 CD	Coatbridge and Airdrie D.L.P.	Mr. W. TRUESDALE, 98, Monkland Street, Airdrie, Lanarks.
J570 CD	Perth D.L.P.	Mr. J. GUILD, JNR., 5, North Methuen Street, Perth.

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## Hints to Party Workers

The headlights attract the attention, but the unseen engine does the work.

Whatever you are, be a good one.

Many a true word has been spoken ungrammatically.

Don't have advanced ideas and be in arrears with contributions.

That is a difficulty—that was.

What we want among members is more "movies" and less "talkies."

A man who is "wrapped up in himself" makes a very small parcel.

If you want work well done, select a busy member—the others have no time.

"I must do something" will solve more Party problems than "something must be done."

A crank is a little thing that makes revolutions.

We are not here to make a living, but a life.

Rose-tinted spectacles are no more deceptive than smoked glasses.

All of us are going to do something to-morrow, and we would do it if we started to-day.

Many a false step is made by standing still.

Beware of the half-truth, you may have got hold of the wrong half.

What a number of impossible tasks have been accomplished by comrades who did not know that they were possible!

The tide turns at low water as well as high.

The real comrade is best known in bad weather.

He is a wise secretary who knows when to tear up a letter he has just written.

There isn't enough darkness in the world to extinguish the light of one small candle.

We were born originals, let us not die copies.

*[The above Hints to Party Workers are extracted from an admirable Bazaar Souvenir published in Huddersfield by the Labour Agent, Ald. A. Gardiner, J.P. Congratulations to Mr. Gardiner on a code which we hope his workers try to live up to.]*



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (HOURS OF POLL) BILL

The following is the text of the Bill on above subject recently introduced by Messrs. Parker and George Griffiths. We are afraid there is little hope of this passing into law.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in the present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. Paragraph 3 of Part III. of the Second Schedule to the Local Government Act, 1933, shall have effect as though the following were added thereto:—

“Provided that—

(a) Where a candidate nominated at an election of a councillor for an electoral division of a county gives, or a number of candidates nominated at an election of councillors for a borough, not being less than the number of councillors to be elected at the election, give notice in writing to the returning officer—

(i) in the case of an election of a councillor for an electoral divi-

sion of a county not later than five o'clock in the afternoon of the day next after the last day for delivery of nomination papers; or

(ii) in the case of an election of councillors for a borough not later than five o'clock in the afternoon of the eighth day before the day of the election;

that he or they respectively wish the poll at that election to be kept open till nine o'clock in the afternoon, this paragraph shall have effect as though ‘nine o'clock in the afternoon’ were substituted for ‘eight o'clock in the afternoon’:

(b) Public notice of an extension of the hours of polling under this paragraph shall be given at the same time, in the same manner and by the same persons as public notice is given of the poll:

(a) A notice given by a candidate under this paragraph shall not be of any effect for the purposes thereof if the candidate is not validly nominated or withdraws his candidature.”

2. This Act may be cited as the Local Government (Hours of Poll) Act, 1938.

**T**HE aim of every local Labour Party should be the publication of its own local paper. The facilities offered by a group of local Parties who run the Southern Counties Workers' Publications Ltd., enable the production of an 8-page paper with a circulation of only 500 to be run without a loss. Has your Party considered co-operation with the “Workers' Monthly” scheme? It can serve the smallest or the largest Party by means of its Socialist and non-profit-making basis. Write at once and get going before November!

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